

# Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) is asking for your assistance to help slow the spread of the novel (new) coronavirus in Los Angeles County. The following recommendations are for In Home Supportive Service (IHSS) personnel assisting with activities of daily living such as:

- House Cleaning
- Meal preparation / Feeding
- Laundry
- Personal care services (i.e., toileting, oral care, bathing, and grooming)

## What is novel coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Many of them infect animals, but some coronaviruses from animals can change and infect humans, then can spread from person-to-person, which happened with this coronavirus.

## How is COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 is likely to spread in the same way as other respiratory illnesses like the flu. It is thought to spread from an infected person who have symptoms to others by:

- Droplets produced through coughing and sneezing.
- Close personal contact, such as caring for an infected person.
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands.

## What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Reported illnesses have ranged from people with mild symptoms to people becoming severely ill, some needing hospitalization, or dying. Symptoms include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Severe illness

## Is there a vaccine or treatment?

Currently, there is no vaccine available and no specific antiviral treatment recommended. People infected with COVID-19 should receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms. This is a rapidly evolving situation, and the CDC will continue to provide updated information as it becomes available. The CDC works 24-7 to protect people's health.

## Can I get tested for COVID-19?

If you are sick, your health care provider may decide to do a test for coronavirus. Only health care providers can test or order a test for COVID-19. Since most people will get better with rest and time, there is no need to see a doctor if you have mild symptoms. If you are sick and think you should be tested for COVID-19, call your doctor before going in for care.

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## What can I do to protect myself and others from COVID-19?

### Hand washing:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, before and after any caregiving activities, and especially after you remove gloves or other protective clothing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

### Wear appropriate barriers during caregiving activities:

#### Gloves

Wear disposable gloves for all caregiving activities and general cleaning activities, especially when you might have contact with:

- Blood
- Body fluids
- Secretions (such as saliva during oral care)
- Excretions (such as feces or urine during toileting care)
- Non-intact skin
- Surfaces or linens soiled with blood or other infectious materials

#### Facemasks

Wear a disposable facemask during caregiving activities, if the client has respiratory illness. Be sure to place a mask on the client as well during these activities.

Throw out disposable facemasks and gloves after use. Do not reuse.

- When removing gloves and mask, first remove and dispose of gloves. Then, immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Next, remove and dispose of facemask, and immediately wash your hands again with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

#### Aprons/Gowns

Consider using a plastic reusable or washable gown or apron and disinfect between uses

- For caregiving activities where splashes and sprays are anticipated.
- For high-contact care activities, including bathing that provide opportunities for transfer of pathogens to the hands and clothing of the caregiver.

### Bathing/Toileting:

- When feasible, consider giving bed baths to patients with respiratory illness symptoms to avoid splashes and getting masks wet.
- Close the lid of the toilet or commode prior to flushing to avoid spraying or splashing

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## **Laundering:**

- Wash items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely.

## **Feeding:**

- Wash hands prior to meal preparation and wear appropriate barriers including gloves & mask if the patient is ill during feeding. Wear gloves while washing utensils and wash hands after removing gloves.

## **House cleaning:**

- Clean & disinfect [frequently touched surfaces](#). This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- For disinfection, diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, and most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective.

## **What should I do if I think I have COVID-19 symptoms?**

Immediately contact your facility or regular health care provider for guidance and evaluation.

- Stay home if you are sick. Try to get someone else to care for the patient
- If you live with the patient and there are no other caregivers, minimize time spent in the patient's room and use a separate bathroom if possible.
- Wear a mask during caregiving activities and place a mask on the patient as well.
- Avoid sharing personal household items like dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with others in the home. After using these items, they should be washed thoroughly with soap and water.
- Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables regularly

## **What if I am stressed about COVID-19?**

When you hear, read, or watch the news about an outbreak of an infectious disease, it is normal to feel anxious and show signs of stress. It is important to care for your own physical and mental health. For help, call the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Access Center 24/7 Helpline at (800) 854-7771 or call 2-1-1.

## **Know where to get reliable information**

Beware of scams, false news and hoaxes surrounding novel coronavirus. Accurate information, including announcements of new cases in LA County, will always be distributed by the LA County Department of Public Health. The website has additional information on COVID-19, including a guide to coping with stress.

- Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
  - <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>
  - Social media: @lapublichealth
- The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Access Center 24/7 Helpline
- (800) 854-7771.
- Call 2-1-1